

## Types of professionalisation in Swiss national sport federations

G. Lang<sup>1</sup>, T. Schlesinger<sup>2</sup>, M. Lamprecht<sup>3</sup>, K. Ruoranen<sup>1</sup>,  
C. Klenk<sup>1</sup>, E. Bayle<sup>4</sup>, J. Clausen<sup>4</sup>, D. Giaume<sup>4</sup>, & S. Nagel<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Bern, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany

<sup>3</sup> Swiss Observatory for Sport and Physical Activity,  
Switzerland

<sup>4</sup> University of Lausanne, Switzerland



# Introduction

---

- > Types have the potential to identify common patterns in organisational designs and may help to better understand professionalisation in sport organisations
- > Previously identified types refer to simplified levels of professionalisation (i.e., from low to high professionalisation) (e.g., Kikulis, Slack, & Hinings, 1992)
- > Cluster analysis may represent the distinctive patterns more precisely than the methodological approaches of previous studies
- > State of development is different in Swiss national sport federations
  - Different types of professionalisation are probable
  - Analysing the diversity in organisational design is meaningful

# Study design

## Sample

- > Online survey of Swiss national sport federations
  - 85 national sport federations
  - Response rate: 100%
  - 16 cases excluded: sample size 69 NSF's (81%)

Naturfreunde  
Amis de la Nature  
Schweiz | Suisse

Schweizer Wanderwege  
Suisse Rando  
Sentieri Svizzeri  
Sendas Svizras



Schweizer  
Paraplegiker  
Stiftung

Fondation  
suisse pour  
paraplégiques

Fondazione  
svizzera per  
paraplegici

Swiss  
Paraplegic  
Foundation

## Data analysis

- > Hierarchical cluster analysis (Ward's algorithm, SED)
- > Analysis of organisational characteristics
  - Description of the clusters and external validation
  - E.g., size of organisation, financial resources, ...  
(Nagel, Schlesinger, Bayle, & Giauque, 2015)



SCHWEIZERISCHER VERBAND FÜR PFERDESPORT  
FEDERATION SZISSE DES SPORTS EQUESTRES  
FEDERAZIONE SVIZZERA SPORT EQUESTRI  
SWISS EQUESTRAIN FEDERATION



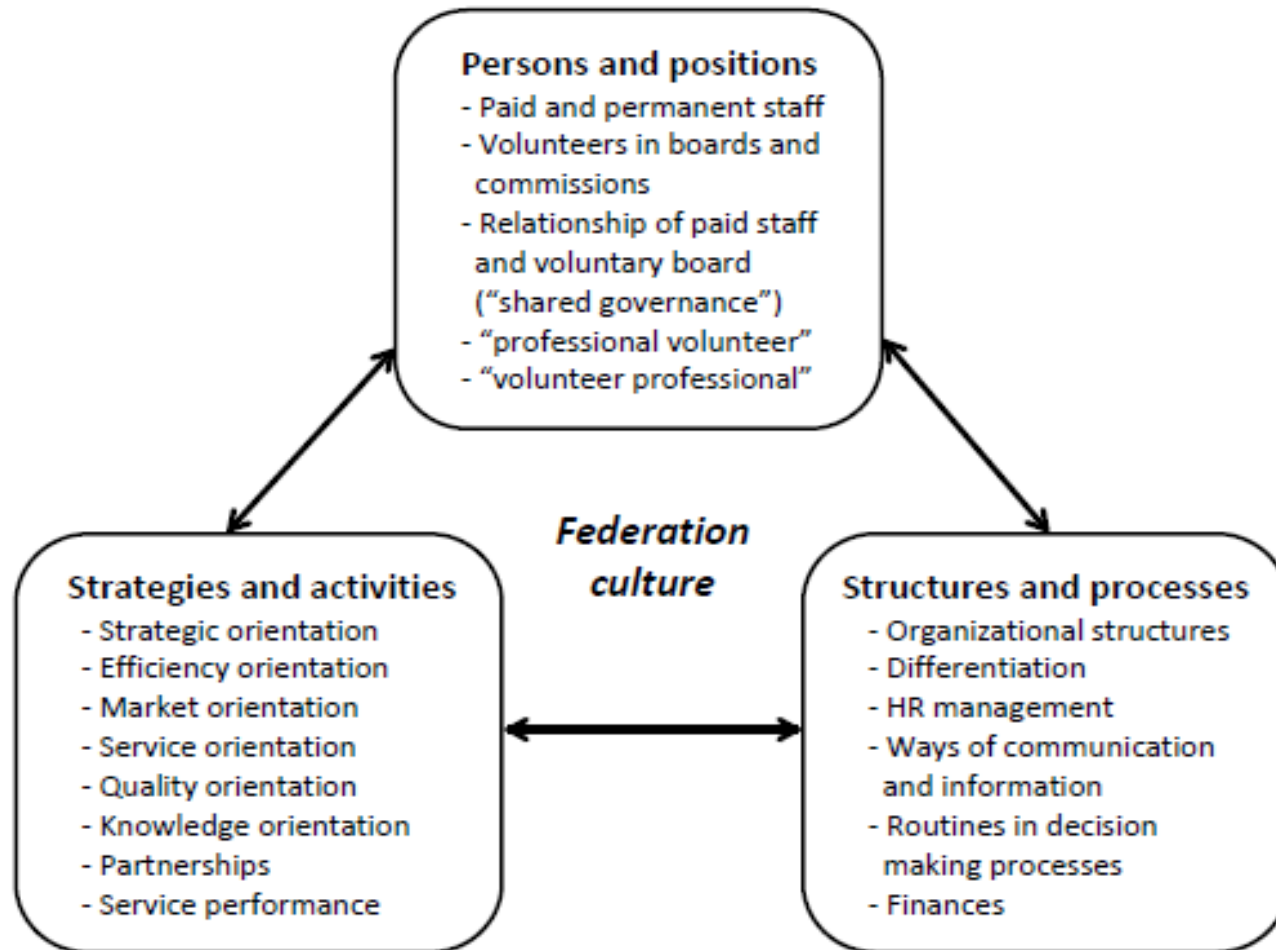
# Research questions

---

- 1) Which types of professionalisation exist in Swiss national sport federations?
- 2) How can the identified types be described with regard to the federations' organisational characteristics?



# Forms of professionalisation in sport federations: a multi-dimensional framework



# Operationalisation: Dimensions and factors

## Dimension «strategies and activities»

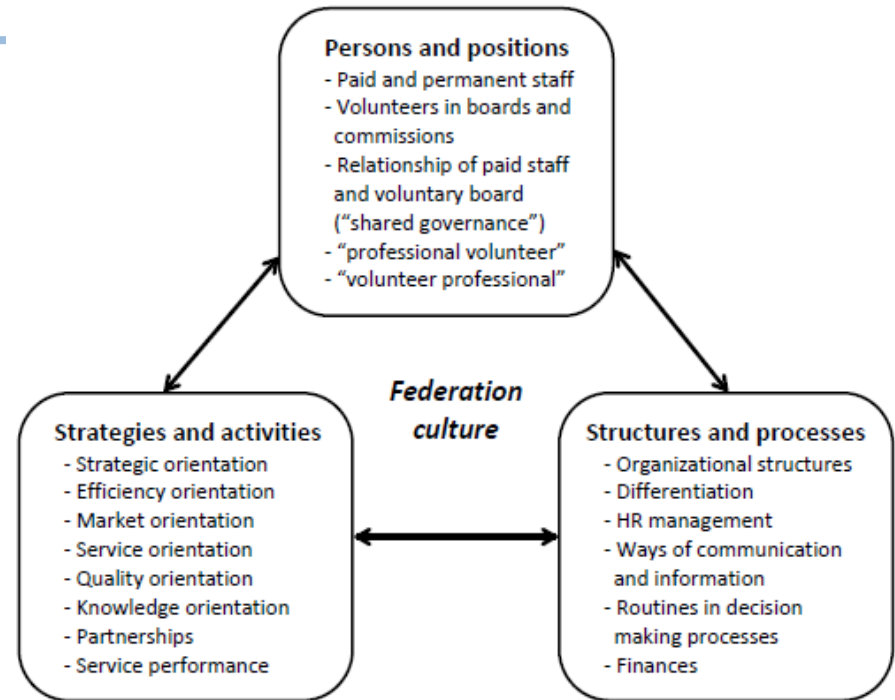
- > Growth orientation
- > Quality and service orientation

## Dimension «structures and processes»

- > Formalisation of strategy
- > Formalisation of marketing and communication
- > Formalisation of HRM

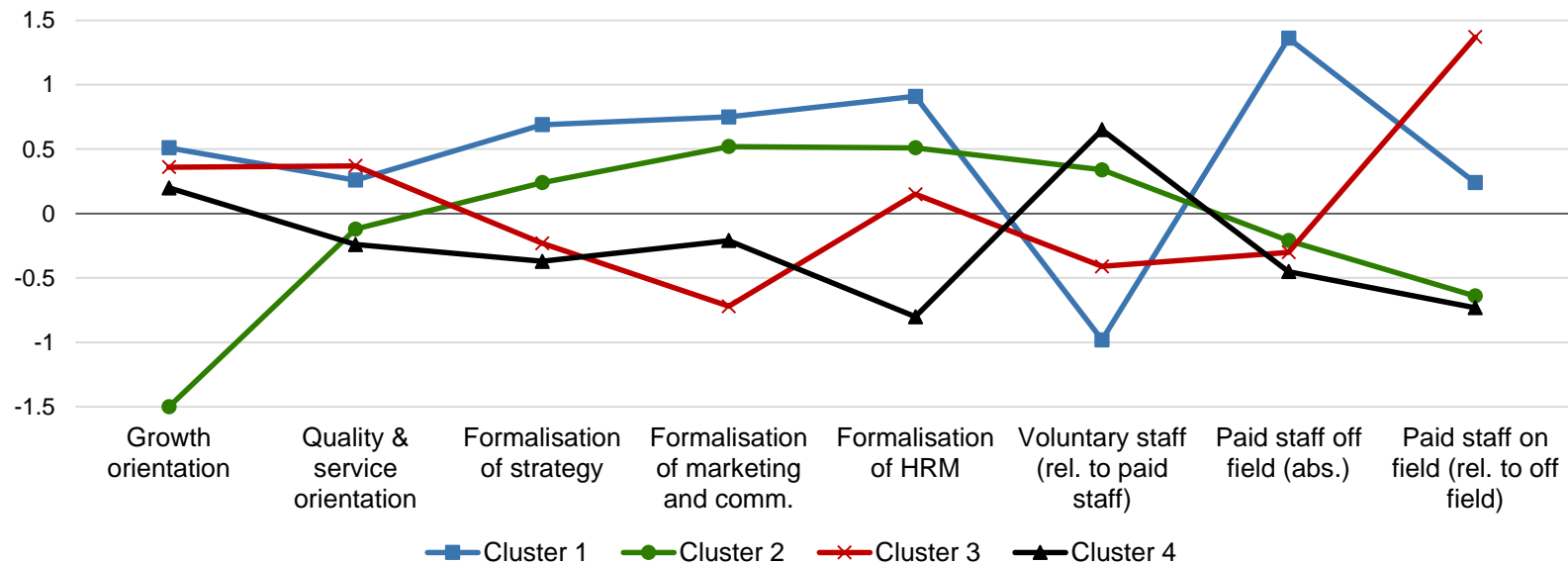
## Dimension «persons and positions»

- > Proportion of voluntary staff in the federation, in relation to paid staff
- > Absolute number of paid staff off the field (management board, executive office and committees)
- > Proportion of paid staff on the field (e.g. paid coaches), in relation to paid staff off the field



Ruoranen et al. (2016)

# Results: Four types of professionalisation



## Cluster 1 (n=14; 20%)

Formalised federations managed by paid staff

## Cluster 2 (n=13; 19%)

Federations managed by volunteers and a few paid staff off the field

## Cluster 3 (n=17; 25%)

Federations with differing formalisation and paid staff on the field

## Cluster 4 (n=25; 36%)

Moderately formalised federations managed by volunteers

# Organisational characteristics of the types

## Cluster 1 (n=14; 20%)

Formalised federations managed by paid staff

### Characteristics:

- Large federations
- Solid financial basis
- 93% Olympic sports
- High performance values



## Cluster 2 (n=13; 19%)

Federations managed by volunteers and a few paid staff off the field

### Characteristics:

- Middle sized federations
- Relatively scarce financial resources
- 8% Olympic sports
- Low performance values



## Cluster 3 (n=17; 25%)

Federations with differing formalisation and paid staff on the field

### Characteristics:

- Rather small sized federations
- Relatively solid financial basis
- 82% Olympic sports
- Average performance values



## Cluster 4 (n=25; 36%)

Moderately formalised federations managed by volunteers

### Characteristics:

- Small sized federations
- Scarce financial resources
- 16% Olympic sports
- Low performance values





## Discussion / Conclusion

---

- > Different types of professionalisation exist and their forms of professionalisation appear to be related to organisational characteristics (size, financial resources, Olympic status)
  - > Olympic status highly determines professionalisation
  - > Different designs in moderately professionalised types (“different kinds of board rooms”)
  - > Quantitative design enables precise measurement of specific aspects, however, it restricts the data collection
  - > Future research
    - A follow-up study could provide data to analyse if organisations move from one type to another
    - Analysis of qualitative performance measures
-

# Thank you very much!

G. Lang<sup>1</sup>, T. Schlesinger<sup>2</sup>, M. Lamprecht<sup>3</sup>, K. Ruoranen<sup>1</sup>, C. Klenk<sup>1</sup>, E. Bayle<sup>4</sup>, J. Clausen<sup>4</sup>, D. Giauque<sup>4</sup>, & S. Nagel<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Bern, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany

<sup>3</sup> Swiss Observatory for Sport and Physical Activity, Switzerland

<sup>4</sup> University of Lausanne, Switzerland



[grazia.lang@ispw.unibe.ch](mailto:grazia.lang@ispw.unibe.ch)

# Literature

---

- Kikulis, L., Slack, T., & Hinings, B. (1992). Institutionally specific design archetypes. A framework for understanding change in National Sport Organizations. *International Review for Sociology of Sport*, 27 (4), 343-368.
- Nagel, S., Schlesinger, T., Bayle, E., & Giauque, D. (2015). Professionalisation of sport federations – a multi-level framework for analysing forms, causes and consequences. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 15 (4), 407-433.
- Ruoranen, K., Klenk, C., Schlesinger, T., Bayle, E., Clausen, J., Giauque, D., et al. (2016). Developing a conceptual framework to analyse professionalization in sport federations. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 13 (1), 55-74.